



Launching *Colorado on the Move™*: A Comprehensive Effort to Increase Physical Activity

Public Health Problem

Between 1987 and 2000, obesity reached epidemic proportions in the United States, with more than 45 million adults classified as obese. In Colorado, adult obesity (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 30) rates increased from 6.9% in 1990 to 14.9% in 2001; the prevalence of overweight (BMI ≥ 25) among adults also rose from 36.7% to 51.6% during those years.

Evidence That Prevention Works

Research has demonstrated that preventive measures such as improved nutrition, tobacco cessation, increased physical activity, and early detection and intervention may prevent heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases. Physical activity helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among the elderly; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications.

Program Example

Through a partnership with the University of Colorado Health Sciences, the Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program is implementing two community interventions in Peetz, Colorado, which has a large rural population, and in the Denver Metro Black Churches, which allows program coordinators to work in an already established urban and African American setting to reach high-risk populations. These interventions focus on a physical activity component to encourage participants to walk 2,000 steps a day more than they walked before the program. Pedometers are offered to assist participants in their efforts. Additional worksites and community sites throughout the state are also participating. The intervention will introduce a nutrition component as well, most likely promoting a 5 A Day campaign. The program has been named *Colorado on the Move™*, and researchers at the University of Colorado plan to expand this effort beyond the currently funded program as additional money becomes available. In addition, four task forces were formed to guide the expansion of this program by assessing the burden of obesity and the impact of the other task force efforts (worksite, school, and community) to promote *Colorado on the Move™* and other initiatives.

Implications

The *Colorado on the Move™* program serves as a model for other states that are trying to encourage increased physical activity. This program demonstrates the importance of promoting community-based programs that encourage small behavioral changes over time to achieve long-term, positive health outcomes.

Contact Information

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment • Physical Activity and Nutrition Program
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South HPDP-A5 • Denver, Colorado 80246-1530
Phone: (303) 692-2606 • Web site: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/>